

pay tribute to Fire Chief Edward R. Oberg of Holden, MA, who is retiring after 40 remarkable years fighting fires and protecting our families.

Over the course of his career, Ed Oberg has put the lives of complete and total strangers before his own. His entire career epitomizes a common hero. He's not on the news, in the papers, or on the radio. Yet, his commitment to public safety will not be forgotten.

Ed began fighting fires in January 1957, and has been rewarded time and again for his remarkable service. In December 1970, he was appointed lieutenant of the fire department, and only 5 years later he was promoted to captain of the department. Three years later, in 1978, he was appointed fire chief. He was also a member of numerous organizations including the Greater Worcester Fire Chiefs Association, where he served a term as president, and the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts, on whose board of directors he served for 10 years.

Mr. Oberg and his wife, Virginia, are the proud parents of three children: Steven, Anthony, and Bianca and three grandchildren: Lynn, Steven, and Kelley. Ed has served the town of Holden with courage, loyalty, and excellence. His service will be sorely missed by those who relied on his tireless dedication to the town of Holden.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ARMS SURPLUS REFORM ACT OF 1997

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Arms Surplus Reform Act of 1997. This legislation will bring much needed reform to the sale of military surplus materiel by the Department of Defense.

If military surplus were simply a matter of combat boots, camouflage, and fatigues, this legislation would not be necessary. But for those in the know, Pentagon surplus can mean a cheap, nearly untraceable supply of weapons and weapons parts that cost the U.S. Government billions of dollars to purchase.

According to the current system, each piece of equipment that the Pentagon designates as surplus is assigned a demilitarization code, or "demil" code. Demilitarization represents the work necessary to make surplus materiel fit for sale to civilians: twisting of gun barrels, mutilation of helicopter frames, removal of explosives from bombs, erasing the memory and software from military application computers, et cetera. Equipment is graded on an alphabetical scale. An "A" code signifies benign materiel when no demilitarization is necessary. A "D" code requires extensive demilitarization before surplus sale.

The problem lies in the execution of the process. Equipment is coded incorrectly and almost always too easily. When Pentagon investigators did a random survey of surplus stock, they found missile simulators, bombs, guidance systems for cruise missiles, fully functional automatic weapons, as well as other potentially deadly materiels. Enforcement of procedure is so lax that an Air Force base in Georgia lost track of \$39 million worth of surplus materiel.

This situation represents more than a fiscal threat to our country. Sophisticated weaponry is finding its way to foreign interests while criminals in the United States rely on military surplus to outfit their operations. A methamphetamine lab run by a national gang was raided by drug enforcement agents in Los Angeles, who found machine guns and flame throwers traceable to arms surplus. One military surplus supplier was outfitting Cobra attack helicopters for resale. According to a story filed in U.S. News and World Report, one such citizen, Ron Garlick of Montana, said, "Mine was fully armed. I had rockets on it and machine guns. I was out there shooting coyotes with them." It's a good thing Mr. Garlick was not shooting at people, the Cobra attack helicopter is one of the deadliest helicopters in the world.

The problem extends beyond domestic purchases. The Chinese are the biggest buyers of sensitive electronic surplus materiel. Among the items recovered from Chinese scrap dealers were encryption devices, submarine parts, radar systems, tubes for Patriot missiles, and parts of the Stealth F-117A fighter. Iran and Iraq are also reported to be large purchasers of military surplus.

As former Secretary of Defense William Taft wrote during the Reagan administration, "... a U.S. Customs investigation has confirmed that the defense surplus system is a source of supply for arms traffickers." The thought of the U.S. Government supplying arms to terrorists, drug runners, and foreign interests is a very disturbing one.

It gets worse. Customs officials examined 240 tons of electronic scrap headed for Hong Kong which originated from the Pentagon Defense Reutilization Marketing Organization [DRMO] base in San Antonio, TX. The officials found massive amounts of sensitive communications and encryption equipment—none of which should have been available for civilian purchase. Thirty-seven internal guidance systems for the Stealth bomber—at an original cost of \$22 million—were headed for Shanghai, without any demilitarization modifications whatsoever.

At Robbins Air Force Base in Macon, GA, the DRMO had adopted a expedited processing program. To speed things up and obtain more sales, a surplus sales manager at Robbins told DRMO investigators she had falsified documents and demilitarization statements, registering weapons and other equipment as scrap that was then made available for sale fully intact.

The Pentagon seems unwilling to correct this problem. Perhaps it is a case of misplaced priorities. An internal e-mail message at the Pentagon laid out the priorities of the surplus program as "1. Profits 2. Profits 3. Profits 4. Profits . . . 6. Accountability"—priority No. 7 was demilitarizing lethal weapons. With the Pentagon unwilling to face the problem, the system needs congressional intervention.

This legislation does not outlaw surplus sales. This bill will not infringe on the rights of collectors or enthusiasts. This bill will absolutely be cost effective because we will no longer be selling Stealth fighter parts at 16 a pound. This legislation simply halts sales and gives the Defense Logistics Agency the time necessary to fix the problems in the program.

The Arms Surplus Reform Act of 1997 will place a moratorium on all surplus arms sales

until the Pentagon gets its house in order. To lift the moratorium, the director of the Defense Logistics Agency must certify to Congress that: the Department of Defense inspector general has completed a full inventory of military surplus stores and stock; the Defense Logistics Agency has reviewed and correctly classified all improper demilitarization codes; and the Comptroller General has reviewed the surplus sales process and made recommendations to the Director of the Defense Logistics Agency concerning improvements to the program.

Currently each service Branch codes its own surplus. The legislation would establish a central coding office within the Defense Logistics Agency which would have oversight over all surplus coding. The central coding office would also oversee the demilitarization of equipment before civilian sale.

To fight abuses of the surplus sale program, the legislation would create a record of sale for military surplus which contains the following: the Department of Defense source of the item, including the military base where it was demilitarized and sold; the degree of demilitarization required and performed; the name of the person purchasing the item and other such information as the Secretary of Defense deems appropriate.

This legislation would also prohibit the Defense Logistics Agency from advertising its available surplus stock on the Internet until the conditions for lifting the moratorium have been met.

I would like to thank my colleagues who have joined me as original cosponsors of this bill. I am grateful to them and share their vision of a more peaceful world. I thank Ms. PELOSI of California, Ms. SLAUGHTER of New York, Mr. LIPINSKI of Illinois, Mr. FILNER of California, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. YATES of Illinois, Mr. MCGOVERN of Massachusetts, Mr. SANDERS of Vermont, Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN of the Virgin Islands, Mrs. LOWEY of New York, Mr. KUCINICH of Illinois, Mr. MCDERMOTT of Washington, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts, Mr. SABO of Minnesota, and Mr. GUTERREZ of Illinois for joining me in this effort.

There is no excuse for the fraud and abuse in this program—especially when these problems lead to deadly consequences. To quote William Portanova, an Assistant U.S. Attorney in California, "On its best day, the military surplus system is morally embarrassing to the government . . . and it never has a best day." Let's change that.

I urge my colleagues to join me as cosponsors of this legislation.

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN DILLTOWN, PA

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity before my colleagues in the House of Representatives to congratulate and pay tribute to the Memorial Baptist Church of Dilltown, PA, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this month.

It gives me great pride—and at the same time, humility—to be able to stand before you